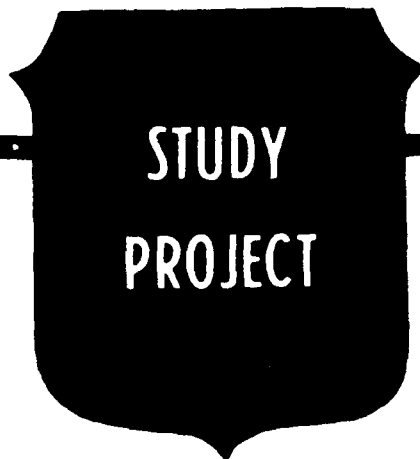


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ONE GERMANY -- A NEW SOVIET STRATEGY?

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROBERT B. CLARKE, AD

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ONE GERMANY - A NEW SOVIET STRATEGY ?

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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U.S. Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013
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ABSTRACT

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The course of post-World War II history has marched us defiantly towards the dramatic, perhaps traumatic series of events which unfold almost daily before our disbelieving eyes. Seemingly hard-line communist countries, even the Soviet Union itself, are showing the signs of strain - cracks in the thin veneer of totalitarianism. Such tremendous and unanticipated change cannot help but resurrect a whole host of unsettled issues, many of which have lain buried in the political rubble created by the Second World War. To the surprise of no one, the German Question is the "piece de resistance" of all these issues, for Germany divided sits at the very core of modern East-West confrontation. In this time of awakening from the oppression of traditional Sovietism, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) will capitalize on their renewed commonalities and reunite into one, single, sovereign state. They will do so soon, and it is in the interest of the Soviet Union and the Western powers to let it happen. This paper examines this issue from the Soviet strategic culture aspect and provides a vector for the American and NATO response.

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FORWARD

At the outset of this project I expected the topic of German reunification to require an extrapolation of the ideas, theories, and experience of a number of scholars on the issue tempered with a bit of clairvoyance on my part. As it progressed, however, many of my conjectures began to appear on the front pages of the newspaper as fast as I could make them. At the same time, the credibility of most well documented books and journal articles prepared as recently as two years ago by some of the subject's most noted political, military, and social-science scholars waned. Happenings and conditions considered inconceivable a year ago are now being discussed freely, and some are even in progress. This is not to say that these scholars are now without credibility, for certainly they could never have predicted the remarkable turn of events we know now to have been inspired by the policies of the Soviet Union's President Mikhail S. Gorbachev. However, I can take solace in the fact that my thought processes were somewhat on target. To the reader who has followed the year's events with earnest, this project may now appear as a "so what." To most readers, however, I hope to provide some insight into the causes and effects of perhaps the most dramatic event since World War II: a united Germany.

INTRODUCTION AND ASSUMPTIONS

CHAPTER I

The course of post-World War II history has marched us defiantly towards the dramatic, perhaps traumatic series of events which unfold almost daily before our disbelieving eyes. Nearly every credible social scientist of some repute will admit to you that these events, particularly those involving "Mother Russia" and her Warsaw Pact fledglings, were virtually unpredictable even five years ago. Seemingly hard-line Communist countries, even Mama Bear herself, the Soviet Union, are showing the signs of strain - cracks, if you will, in the thin veneer of totalitarianism. Certainly such tremendous and unanticipated change cannot help but resurrect a whole host of unsettled issues, many of which have lain buried in the political rubble created by the Second World War. To the surprise of no one, the German Question is the "piece de resistance" of all these issues, for Germany divided sits at the very core of modern East-West confrontation. In this time of awakening from the oppression of traditional Sovietism, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) will capitalize on their renewed commonalities and reunite into one, single, sovereign state (call it, simply, *Germany*). They will do so soon, and it is in the interest of the Soviet Union and the Western powers to let it happen. This paper will explain why.

To create the environment and limit the scope for the development of this thesis, a series of assumptions must be made.

In light of the rapidity of recent events, many of which are so unpredictable as to make any study of this region subject to being discredited on any number of assailable points, these assumptions are intended to freeze some key variables simply to enable a reasonable analysis of the situation.

The first assumption of this study must be that the current trend in Soviet international relations remains on the track set by Gorbachev. It is trite to say that Mr. Gorbachev has, through the short 5-year course of his leadership, had a uniquely profound impact on world affairs. In the Soviet Union, where the outside world little understands the internal and strategic culture, the vast implications of perestroika are mind boggling even to the experienced, socio-political analyst. Catastrophic events and radical restructuring are happening at such a whirl-wind pace that one begins to question whether or not Gorbachev can keep it under control. This analysis must assume, however, that he can, or that his chartered course has proceeded sufficiently far as to make it impossible to return to a pre-Gorbachev Soviet Union.

Similarly, we must make a second assumption that the current wave of changes in Eastern Europe likewise must remain under control. Each country of the Warsaw Pact, at least as it was considered a year ago, has experienced some change in its relationship to the Soviet Union. Although many of them are undergoing some form of political and social reform, some significantly so, it is clear that they all share the fact that the Soviet Union has lessened its grip. The final story will not be

told for some time, but for any meaningful assessment of the German Question, it is important to assume that stability, although fragile, will be maintained. Nothing must happen over the course of the foreseeable future which would draw the United States and the Soviet Union into direct confrontation; if it does, all bets are off.

The third premise dictates that the interests of the United States with regard to the West European continent remain unchanged. None of our interests there can be categorized as essential to our survival as a nation. But there are a number of interests, in particular the defense of the British homeland and the economic well being of West Germany, which are vital to the United States. In general, concerns over the sovereignty and economic well being of all Western European nations are for the United States a major interest.¹

The final but certainly most important assumption is that the FRG and the GDR can unite. Although this assumption provides the hypothesis for the analysis to follow, it lies closer to fact than to mere guess. It is beyond the scope of this assessment to consider the feasibility of such an occurrence. Certainly there exists a plethora of complex tasks which must be accomplished before a union of this magnitude can be accomplished. Let it suffice at this point to say that changes in governments do occur and, if willed by the people, will happen regardless of the difficulties many political experts espouse.

With regard to this assumption, a cursory review of history

is in order. Following the unconditional surrender of the Third Reich, the Potsdam agreement set out the division of the defeated Germany into zones to be occupied by the winning powers. This agreement stated that Germany would be disarmed and democratized. Further, provisions were made for the creation of administrative bodies which would affect the rule of law. In its sector, the Soviet Union had already established the Sowjetische Militaradministration in Deutschland (SMAD) which began almost immediately to issue binding orders for the Soviet zone. Shortly later, in 1946, the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) joined forces with the new Communist Party of Germany (KPD) to form the Socialist Unity Party (SED).² Within a few short years, this creation was soon headed by a Soviet-educated political leader, Walter Ulbricht, and the German solution to the Stalinization of Germany was cast.³ This all came to pass against the early wishes of Stalin himself who desired to see a united Germany.⁴

Issues in the American, French, and British sectors of Germany following the Potsdam Agreement were more complex. Ultimately, however, the Americans and British emerged as the two strongest players on the one side to counter the activities transpiring in the Soviet zone. Following extensive efforts pursuing denazification, reestablishing a democratic government, and getting the economy moving (Marshall Plan), the American, British, and French foreign ministers guaranteed in 1949 full powers of self-government to what was now considered the West German state.

Meanwhile, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was

established, and in 1955, the new sovereign state of the FRG became a full member, agreeing to create its own armed forces to contribute to the defense of the alliance. To counter the NATO threat, not to mention its concern of a rearmed Germany, the Soviet Union created the Warsaw Treaty Organization. These two pacts, then, have served to execute and perpetuate the division of Germany, a result never intended at war's end.

In spite of the unnatural division, perhaps more a result of mistrust and misunderstanding in a complex post-war environment, the Germanys have been growing both together and apart ever since. On the one hand, the leadership of the FRG, beginning with Chancellor Willie Brandt, enacted a policy referred to as "Ostpolitik," a series of significant economic, political, and cultural programs designed to aid their GDR brothers toward the ultimate goal of reunification. Yet the GDR, sitting in the sea of common German culture and a constant barrage of FRG television and American-sponsored radio, has towed the hard-line of socialism to the extent that they have oft been touted as the Soviet Union's best example. Over the course of the years, however, the constant stream of defectors from East to West, sometimes at a trickle and other times in masses, indicates that perhaps the depth of loyalty to the socialist camp can be measured in inches, maintained solely by the ruling elite. GDR President Eric Honecker's policy of "abgrenzung," enacted to limit the threat of Western influence and stem the tide of defection merely underscores the difficulties the GDR faced in preserving the established order.⁵

Since assuming power in the Soviet Union, Gorbachev and his policy of glasnost have stirred profound changes within all East European regimes, not the least of which is the GDR. Most importantly, the openness revealed clearly that the GDR has never really met its post-war goals of economic development. In spite of being the best developed country of the Warsaw Pact, the GDR has never approached the success enjoyed by its Western brother.⁶ In fact, it is safe to assume that the massive amounts of aid provided by the FRG have truly subsidized the headway that it did make. Because of this revelation, the perception of fame and fortune in the West surged through the GDR populace, exciting many to flee their homeland. This exodus has begun to rob the East Germans of much of their talented work force, so opening the borders to allow East Germans to visit and return became the obvious solution. The result, of course, was simply more openness; abgrenzung was dead.

Recent years have also seen the younger generation of Germans, both East and West, separate themselves from the inheritance of World War II. Their parents who experienced the last great war have aged to retirement from the leadership of the country, whether they be in business or public office. The younger generation, raised without the painful memories of war and in some respects ignorant or at least apathetic of the sacrifices that brought peace to the land, have come to a startling conclusion. They realize that the superpowers have decided to draw the forward edge of the battle area for the next war along the boundary separating the two Germanys. Simply put, they now understand that if the superpowers

chose to slug it out, they will do so not on their own territories, but Germany's.⁷ To this younger generation, the solution of total disarmament or at least a significant reduction in forces and weapons is the obligatory solution. Although the more conservative, senior, political factions in both the GDR and FRG hold the reigns at the moment, it is clear that only a few years remain before more liberals, people who owe no allegiance to the victorious powers of World War II, can exert their muscle.

The harbingers cannot be ignored. From a very unsettling beginning after World War II and the creation of an unnatural state, the relentless efforts on the part of the FRG government to pursue reunification (in spite of GDR efforts to the contrary) and the awakening of a shared-heritage people to the fact that they no longer need to be the battlefield of the future all set the stage for the earnest reopening of the "German Question" in 1990. In view of the fact that the leaders of both superpowers have granted support for the reunification of Germany, notwithstanding the enormous complexities associated with such a grandiose undertaking, Germany will be a country whole.⁸

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THE SOVIET ANSCHAUUNG

CHAPTER II

For more than four decades now, East and West Germany have stood divided, each growing under an opposing culture of the great Cold War. Each has become imbedded in the strategic plan of its benefactor to the point that, to younger generations who never saw it otherwise, it seems natural to be that way. With the implementation of new policies of President Gorbachev, however, pent-up, unsettled World War II issues have burst open. Leading the flood of revisited issues is the "German Question" which has surged onto the world scene with burning impatience. For the Soviet leadership, the potential loss of a pivotal member of Moscow's defensive alliance seems a contradiction to a cultural paradigm and the resurrection of what would appear by name and nationality to be its loathsome enemy of the Great Patriotic War. How could the U.S.S.R. accept such a drastic paradox to history? Could it be possible that President Gorbachev wants it to happen, perhaps even encouraging it along?

Before the rubble of war had been swept away, the Soviet Union realized the GDR provided them an exclusive opportunity. Since the German government, and for that matter most of its influential, energetic manpower, were decimated during the war, Stalin knew he could begin anew in the East German sector. Purged of disloyals (especially ex-Nazis), the strong Lenin-inspired leadership of Walter Ulbricht and a society void of active politics and

government provided Moscow the right place, circumstances, and time to establish a loyal puppet. Willingly, the GDR succumbed to total control by the Soviet Union, satisfying the latter's cultural inability to trust its security to another sovereign.¹

Having suffered seemingly innumerable attacks and defeats and incalculable tragedy throughout history, the Soviet Union, as a nation and a people, has nurtured a virtual paranoia towards survival. Deeply imbedded in its culture is an insatiable search for security and an uncanny willingness to resource any endeavor to provide it.² The eastern zone of Germany, "belonging" now to the Soviet Union as a spoil of the Second World War, became the logical solution for this basic need. Its position, sitting astride a goodly portion of the traditional attack route from Western Europe and now sharing a common border with the capitalist, imperialist West, thrust the GDR to the center stage of Soviet defense policy.³ Once it was apparent that the Germans would remain divided, and once the Western powers permitted the rearming of the Western German sector and its inclusion in NATO, the Soviets found the physical division of the states must be exploited.

Viewed to be an integral part of its security concerns, the culture of the GDR provided the Soviet Union a medium which could be used to enhance its communist mission. Even though the people of the two Germanys shared a common heritage, Soviet generated propaganda intensified local rivalries and galvanized the two post-war cultures against each other. Most importantly, this created a socio-political ally in the GDR, ensuring that its loyalties were

oriented to the East. The Soviets felt this would forestall a resurgence of German nationalism which could one day rise against them.⁴

Securing the GDR culturally into the Eastern camp also provided a filter against the influence of Western values. Its position provided the physical distance to reduce direct, Western, personal and media contact with the Soviet people. More importantly, since the GDR received influence from both East and West sources, it became, to the Communist Party leadership, an ideal laboratory to experiment with new socialist concepts.⁵ As with other countries of East Europe, Germany became the proving ground for Soviet socialist doctrine. Socialism had to succeed there to lend legitimacy to the Soviet-espoused, Communist philosophy of socialist internationalism.⁶

Relative to occasional troubles throughout the rest of the Eastern bloc, things worked out so well between the Soviet Union and the GDR that a generation has been raised to believe that a stable, perhaps even permanent balance had been achieved. This was the situation, of course, until Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika penetrated the international scene. These concepts, although not really new in Soviet history, are now having new and profound impacts on the very fabric of socialist societies. Although one could argue that the Soviet Union's underlying strategic culture has not truly changed, these concepts are manifesting themselves through surprising cultural, economic, and security dimensions. As unanticipated events unfold with every new

day, the way the Soviets think of and deal with Eastern Europe now moves on an irreversible path of change.

Glasnost and perestroika are spelling a neoteric, revolutionary relationship between the Soviet Union and the GDR. The factors of the old filiation which found their origins in Moscow's selfish passion for security are no longer valid or, in view of more pressing issues, have become antithetic to its own survival.

From the socio-political viewpoint, the time is right for the Soviets to cut the GDR loose. The resignations of Presidents Honecker then Krenz, the opening of the borders and the tearing down of the Berlin Wall, and the people's storming of the Secret Police headquarters all paint a new dawn for the GDR. It seems doubtful that the current leadership under President Hans Modrow will be able to placate the people long enough to demonstrate that socialism can, in fact, provide the economic development that is so desperately needed. After all, they have been unable to produce significant improvement in the quality of life during the past forty years; why would now be any different?

The current lull in the storm, albeit probably short, has occurred only because there is no organized alternative to the present regime to right the ship of progress and growth. One thing, however, is quite clear: the hard-line, socialist leadership in the GDR is no more. Particularly now with the borders open, the citizens of the GDR who become disenchanted with progress can easily escape to the West; of course a common cultural heritage,

language, and family ties make this a relatively easy solution for many. The longer the leadership takes to show progress, the more people leave...leaving jobs, technical services, and experience desperately needed for the survival of the GDR's economy. So the GDR socialist leadership, or any leadership which might replace it, faces a geometrically descending, economic spiral and, hence, an endlessly ascending liability for Moscow unless something miraculous occurs to reenchant the people.

The Soviet Union's greatest concern is that glasnost has killed the perception that East Germany is the model, non-Soviet, socialist state. The Soviet Union spent \$80 billion during the 70s decade alone, and more than \$4.5 billion annually since to keep her East European allies afloat economically.⁷ The GDR, a recipient of a significant portion of this assistance, also received an enormous annual stipend (more than \$2 billion) from the FRG, not to mention more than \$500 million annually in personal care packages from relatives in the FRG.⁸ Any thoughts that the great socialist experiment was responsible for making the GDR the economic wonder of the Soviet bloc have been dispelled by the knowledge that what success she has enjoyed has come largely from outside loans and grants. This newfound openness has revealed that the GDR's self-proclaimed economic success is a myth. In fact, most functions common to any modern society such as housing, schools, hospitals, and factories have suffered from decades of neglect. The GDR has lacked the capital, the trained personnel, and the political freedom to excite the innovative development of

the country.⁹ The Soviet Union, then, can no longer boast of the GDR as a success story. Nor can she, burdened enormously with serious internal economic difficulties of her own, bail the GDR out.

The most appealing solution for the GDR, then, is to yield to the cultural gravity of the situation and unite with (or be subsumed by) the FRG. As sympathetic "big brother," the FRG is currently the unchallenged economic leader in Europe, destined to become the economic center-of-mass of the impending "Europe-92." Union with the GDR would cost the FRG billions in modernization efforts, but a quick glance at the FRG's post-World War II reconstruction track record reveals that the German work ethic and economic savvy can tackle the great challenges. This one may take a decade. The sheer magnitude of the business and industrial market opportunities may dwarf the burden of the desperately needed social modernization, which, under Ostpolitik, has been evolving (albeit slowly) for years anyway.

The critical question to the Soviets, then, isn't whether or not to let this great economy emerge, but how to take advantage of the mammoth opportunity when it does. First of all, precedence exists to allow the economic tie to exist, reunification or not. The Helsinki accord of 1975, among other things, sanctioned East European economic contacts with the West.¹⁰ The GDR and FRG have taken full advantage of this provision for years. But the Soviets need more than a divorce from the GDR economic's woes; they need to establish a solid, economic bridge to the great opportunities

of the West, opportunities which bear the potential of rescuing their own economic tragedy without their having to resort to capitalism.¹¹

There are two precursors to the construct of this bridge: the Soviets must keep the ties of "friendship" open with their East European "allies", and they must be willing to open their own economy to outside (Western) investment. The former may be somewhat tricky as these countries share more common heritage with each other than they individually share with the Soviet Union. The people of the FRG, of course, have always considered the Soviets their enemy, and the people of the GDR, although mostly sympathetic to socialism, are resentful of Soviet domination during the past 40-plus years. Considering the circumstances, a unified Germany could justifiably and spitefully thumb their noses at the Soviets. To the Soviet Union, the answer to this challenge is to allow the East European countries to take their own course (self-determination), so that each may look back on the Soviet leadership as a parent who has decided his children have grown and now need to be out on their own. The intent, of course, is to put the past behind them and capitalize on the potential for economic improvement they all require.

The latter precursor suggests the Soviet Union open itself to outside investment, leading to the traditional vagaries of capitalistic foreign involvement in a socialist economy - some would say an insolvable contradiction - and the floating of the ruble to establish it as a viable currency on the world market.

In a society with virtually no remaining tradition or practice of a market economy, the only chance for success may lie in the "economic buffer" which Germany could provide. Riding on the coattails of the GDR experiment as it goes through a similar transformation may serve the Soviet Union well. As Western industry adjusts to the pitfalls inherent to expanding into the GDR's ex-socialist society, Moscow's economic policies can adjust along the way. In this sense the GDR will satisfy its role as the Soviet Union's laboratory once again.

From an economic standpoint, then, the Soviets are presented with an alluring and lucrative opportunity. The reunification of Germany will release them of the burden of what is now known as an economic failure in the GDR, a socialist failure if you will, and it will provide them an open door to what is likely to become one of the most powerful economies of the world.

The Soviet national security dimension, however, is the real alligator in the pond, for the Soviets since World War II have measured defense of the homeland paramount over all other considerations. How can Moscow logically take even the slightest dent in her heretofore impenetrable armor? Is it even conceivable that it would permit one of its prized wolves to stray from the pack, much less the most ready, most poised one? More importantly, would it do so without a fight? After all, post-World War II is replete with examples in which the Soviets chose to use force, and formidable force at that, to quell any discord in the bloc: Hungary, 1956; Czechoslovakia, 1968; and Afghanistan, 1978.

The trend in recent times, however, has been one of calculation and restraint. Building on the foundation of the Helsinki accord, an agreement among Warsaw Pact members that force would not be used to resolve international territorial disputes, recent Soviet decisions of the kind reveal a more tolerant attitude. In fact, Gorbachev has formally renounced the Brezhnev Doctrine as Soviet policy. With Afghanistan the lone, brash example, severe social unrest such as the Solidarity movement in Poland, 1980-1981, have erupted with little more than Soviet rhetoric and negotiation as a response.

It is quite apparent from recent, more dramatic events now visible to the West (and perhaps even generated by the policy of glasnost) that the Soviet Union is quite apprehensive about committing itself to the use of military force. First, their experience in Afghanistan has made them respect the difficulties a traditional, mechanized, military force can face in unconventional style warfare. Second, they are distracted by a growing host of internal ethnic and nationalism problems which have demanded the use of force to maintain order. In both cases, the Soviet people have demonstrated a reluctance to send their sons off to another war, especially when it is to be fought against their own people.¹² Simply put, the Soviets have had several opportunities lately to exercise military muscle as they are traditionally wont to do, but they have exercised restraint instead. It is increasingly apparent that rather than knee-jerk into physical confrontation, they choose to weigh the impact of the

threat on their national survival and their courses of action on world opinion before they commit military force. Recent events in the Baltic states, the Balkans, and East Europe reveal that they have clearly raised the threshold of military commitment.

The key Soviet security issue in Europe, however, has remained steadfast since the end of the Second World War: get the Americans out. The creation of NATO with the United States as a principle player was to make this difficult, and the American rise to the leadership role through the course of the "Cold War" has made a United States withdrawal inconceivable...until now. Undeniably even to the Soviet Union, the NATO alliance has provided enduring stability to the European region, both politically and militarily. It has also provided a forum to consolidate multinational interests, particularly in the course of arms and force reduction negotiations. But in the eyes of the Soviets, the presence of American forces even as a part of NATO, poised but kilometers away from buffer state borders continues to be a destabilizing, aggressive threat.

The reunification of Germany, however, may provide the long awaited opportunity for the Soviet Union to approach its goal of removing American forces from the European mainland. No doubt, though, it will carry a heavy price tag. According to GDR Communist Party boss Gregor Gysi, a precursor for the East Germans to accept reunification is the withdrawal of all foreign (other than German) military forces from German territory.¹³ This is a tall order from both sides; the Soviets currently have

approximately 19 divisions stationed in East Germany; NATO , less the FRG, has 9 division-equivalents in West Germany.¹⁴ Recent concessions between Presidents Gorbachev and Bush clearly indicate a desire on both sides to affect troop reductions, but nothing on the order of total withdrawal.¹⁵

A united Germany, on the other hand, is such a dramatic departure from the traditional sedentary issues of Europe that it just may provide the catalyst to excite quantum leaps in progress on military stationing. The economic benefit of not having to support nearly a half-million combat ready soldiers on foreign soil, many of whom serve in the GDR, is particularly attractive to the Soviets. In light of their current internal plight, it may be attractive enough to suggest that they initiate more force reduction offers unilaterally. Given Moscow's recent acceptance of Czechoslovakian and Hungarian requests for troop withdrawal,¹⁶ it is quite conceivable that the Soviets would be willing to follow suit in the eastern sector of the reunited Germany. Doing so, of course, would lay a significant bargaining chip on the NATO table. Following just such an overture, the United States may be willing to reciprocate, particularly if encouraged by the German government. Chancellor Kohl of the FRG has stated emphatically that a reunited Germany would remain tied to NATO,¹⁷ but NATO is primarily a political alliance, and Kohl could satisfy this requirement without a foreign military presence.

The Warsaw Pact, a consideration because it owes its existence to the division of Germany, is no longer a contributing factor in

the reunification issue. In the first place, its construct is really little more than a series of bilateral agreements with East European countries for the purpose of generating forces to defend the Soviet homeland.¹⁸ As such, defections from it become a two-sided issue with the Soviet Union only rather than a shared or cooperative defense issue. The recent willingness on the part of the Soviet Union to withdraw its forces from Czechoslovakia and Hungary and the more general policy of permitting East European, political self-determination indicates that the Soviet Union is likely to allow Warsaw Pact defections as well.

The case of East Germany, in the second place, may be moot. Once Moscow's proud example of non-Soviet forces, the East German military ranks now stand decimated. Defections to the West have taken many of its original strength of 170,000, and many of the ones remaining are working at civil service jobs to keep the country running.¹⁹ So if withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact is a precursor to reunification, it has (from the East German viewpoint) ostensibly been accomplished.

The logical conclusion of this argument is that the Soviets will not oppose the reunification of Germany. Specifically they will neither oppose the withdrawal of the GDR from the Warsaw Pact nor the withdrawal of all Soviet forces from German soil. This is not to say, of course, that the Soviet military force is impotent, for to be sure it remains as the largest, best equipped conventional force in the world. The question really reduces to one of intent. It has become clear in recent days that the Soviet

Union is forced to think of national survival in a new way: through economic development rather than through physical security. This revelation is so strong as to propose the hypothesis that the reunification of Germany is really Gorbachev's idea for a new Soviet strategy in Europe. In the long run the Soviet Union has so much to gain from such a happening. They no longer enjoy the benefit of the cultural insulation; they can arguably maintain sufficient security of the homeland and consolidate their military into a leaner, better quality force; they can focus on settling internal nationalistic and ethnic unrest; and they can exploit sound, economic development through the German "bridge" to the West. With benefits of such a policy far outweighing the risks, it appears they have no reasonable alternative.

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12. Michael Dobbs, "Soviet Military's Cracks Show in Azerbaijan Clashes," The Washington Post, 28 January 1990, pp.A1, A20.

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THE AMERICAN AND NATO RESPONSE

CHAPTER III

To be complete, it is appropriate to address the Western concerns of the impending restructuring of the Soviet-German relationship. Since the end of World War II, the interests of the United States in Europe have remained relatively constant. We have maintained emphasis on those interests through the political and military structure of NATO. Our interests, albeit none of them of survival importance to the United States directly, address vital issues of defense of the American homeland, world order, economic well-being, and the promotion of values.¹ The United States clearly makes the argument that failure to satisfy economic and defense interests in Europe would bring a direct threat to the United States itself. The American commitment to NATO, manifested in and demonstrated by permanently stationed forces throughout Europe and by a nuclear "umbrella" over Europe underscores its importance.

Gorbachev's "new thinking" is bringing about vast changes in the way the Soviet Union has traditionally dealt with Eastern Europe. As shown in chapter II, these changes may be more than a simple reawakening of the dormant dreams of Germans for a reunited state. They may, in fact, be tangible evidence of a new Soviet strategy. We must not make the assumption that every Soviet strategy is inherently negative to American interests. We must, therefore, award it circumspect assessment.

The United States, and Western Europe for that matter, must

support German reunification to remain consistent with long espoused policies. It is important to remember that the philosophy that created the NATO alliance was based on the notion that Germany should be whole; only when efforts at unification failed did the post-war powers agree on separation. Because of an inability to get the four post-war powers to agree, German unity was not a written goal of the alliance. The normalization of relations between the two republics, however, has been tacitly understood since 1949. Further, the United States has consistently promoted the right of self-determination in its policies internally and internationally. Should the peoples of the two Germanys choose, the United States and the other countries of the NATO alliance should not oppose them.

Generally, however, German reunification enjoys support among most European nations, East and West. Some rumbling has emerged, spelling demands for all nations of Europe to have a say in the matter.² This concern largely comes from some old right-wing leaders who simply cannot forget the terror of the Third Reich as indeed they should not. They fear that a reunited Germany would arise like the Phoenix to renew aggression and hegemony (revanchism). They refuse to acknowledge that the political and governmental establishment in the FRG is structured to prohibit such a return to the nightmarish past, at least as much as any government could.

It is particularly important now not to lose sight of the real purpose of NATO...or any alliance for that matter: to insure

stability, preserve world order, and keep the peace. If that goal can be accomplished without the physical presence of a military force, the Clausewitzian philosophy toward the use (and hence stationing) of a military force has been honored. In spite of a natural military inertia against adjusting a 40-year construct against the Warsaw Pact threat, changes in the Soviet posture demand a reassessment. NATO's door to negotiation on the stationing of forces must be open.

Economically, a one-Germany is a bitter-sweet pill. On the one hand, potential troop withdrawal agreements may allow the United States to significantly reduce the number of forces committed overseas. Although clearly beyond the scope of this paper, the subject of force adjustments and restationing is a significant and complex issue. However, suffice it to say that in times of economic austerity, any excuse to save money for use in domestic areas will have Congressional interest of the highest order. On the other hand, the creation of a larger-than-life Germany with the potential for tremendous development and market control carries with it the potential of reordering the international economic status.

American security interests, however, dominate the list of one-Germany concerns. More important than any other issue is the furtherance of or perhaps the complete decoupling of the United States militarily from the European continent. It may be possible to negotiate the retention of some American forces within the borders of the united Germany. After all, Chancellor Kohl has

clearly stated that such a union will not cause a break in the loyalties which have so richly developed since the times of war.³ But one has to question the value of a token force in a distant land where timely reinforcements are doubtful. Surely the United States learned after the Korean War debacle that a "trip-wire" strategy is not wise. In a day when strategic nuclear forces have proven their deterrent value, it is possible to devise a strategy to support the stability of the European landmass without the direct presence of American soldiers. The primary concern, of course, is that the physical presence of a sizeable force of soldiers in the alliance permits the United States to exert itself in a NATO leadership role. Without significant American presence, leadership of the alliance would be left to the European nations. One-Germany or not, the European continent's military and economic stability is vital to American national interests. The United States must maintain a significant role in NATO, with or without forward deployed soldiers.

Of the six key tenets of NATO procedure recently espoused by General Colin Powell, none would be compromised simply by a shifting of political and military order generated by a unified Germany. This is not to say that the alliance is hallow or no longer useful. On the contrary, the alliance perhaps now serves a more mature cause in that it centers itself, more than ever before, on those whom the alliance is supposed to represent: the Europeans. "The keystone of our alliance," said General Powell, "is consultation, both political and military."⁴

If issues of the superpowers lie in one dimension and issues of Europe lie in a second, then a third dimension of the issue may well lie in the Middle-East. As one would expect, concerns of a reemergence of the Third Reich run deep in Israel. Many realize that times have changed; they do not fear a new Germany capable of a World War II style "final solution." However, they place the real concern on the potential for the general waning of American interest and influence in the Middle-East.⁵ Long the protector (if not guarantor) of existence for Israel, the Americans may demonstrate some momentum towards isolationism which may in turn lessen the financial, military and cultural support Israel so desperately needs for survival. It is perhaps wise, then, that the United States reaffirm its commitment to Israel's continued existence. By doing so it must assuage any thoughts on the part of anti-Israeli factions to read American withdrawal from Europe as a sign of disinterest in the Middle East.

As expressed by a number of Western leaders recently, the reunification of Germany is a likely course; Soviet "new thinking" has made it so. It is incumbent upon the United States and NATO to honor long-standing commitments to the right of self-determination and post-World War II normalization. However, the issue is a tricky mine field of enormous proportions. Western leaders and analysts must guard against paranoia towards the traditional "evil" Soviet machine and approach this new, hopeful opportunity with a clear analysis of the facts and true intentions. Most of all, it is important that we adjust to this changing world

mindful that the purpose and construct of NATO are not etched in stone. European security and stability can be approached in many ways. The approach selected must necessarily enhance the security of the United States without giving the appearance of neglecting friends on the periphery.

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CONCLUSION

CHAPTER IV

The reunification of Germany, a country divided since the end of World War II, a people of common heritage divided on ideological, political, and economic bases for more than forty years, will be no small task. But it *will* happen, and it will happen soon. Soviet acceptance, the highest hurdle, has been cleared.¹ Given a somewhat stable Europe, the simple magnetism between the peoples of the two divided nations will make it so, perhaps sooner than many people think.

In the final analysis, the Soviet Union gets so many opportunities out of the merger that it could logically be accused of encouraging its occurrence. Even in this bright, new world of glasnost it is likely that the Soviet leadership will achieve what Soviet socialism has demanded all along, and it will do it with one hand clenched secretly behind its back. A united Germany, even if conspicuously absent from the Warsaw Pact, even if devoid of permanently stationed Soviet and NATO soldiers, is likely to bring the Soviets an undisguised blessing. With a reasonably acceptable risk in state security, the U.S.S.R. can win the economic prize: a friendly, first-class economic power with the ability and willingness to serve as a source for capital and investment.

The Western powers must stand behind their rhetoric. The unnatural division of Germany, especially since it will end as a matter of self-determination, must receive the full support of NATO

and the United States. This is not to say, of course, that security interests must be compromised; it just needs, like anything else worth doing, careful analysis and prudent adjustment. As one noted military leader said in a lecture at the United States Army War College in January, 1990, "we [the West] are victims of our own success." We must view these astounding events in Europe, in particular the reunification of Germany, as a return to normalcy, a positive manifestation of the success of 45 years of military readiness, cooperation among allies, and the successful defiance of a formidable, Communist threat. Perhaps it can be said: the Europeans have won. Maybe it can be said in 1992 that the Germanys are unified, *not reunified*², for this new country is truly a combination of two nations, departed from their shared historical nightmare of the Third Reich, borne of the thaw of the Cold War.

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